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NEA

The Honorable George Shultz  
Secretary of State  
Department of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

REF ID: A71251  
1 RELEASE  
1 EXEMPT  
1 DRAFT  
1 DRAFT Non-Refundable Info  
F.O.A Exemptions  
PA Exemptions

We are writing to express our profound concern over recent reports which indicate that China may be considering a sale of ballistic missiles to Syria. If true, such a sale would have a potentially destabilizing effect on the Middle East and, more broadly, would seriously exacerbate the problem of missile proliferation in this volatile and troubled region.

We regret, Mr. Secretary, the necessity of writing this letter. It occurs against the backdrop of the past few years, which have witnessed the establishment and gradual warming of relations--and the buildup of trust--between the U.S. and China. The increased cooperation between our two countries on a variety of economic, military, and diplomatic endeavors has brought benefits to both sides, and will be part of an ongoing process, absent serious disruptions arising from the bilateral relationship or from differences elsewhere.

In the past 18 months, however, China has demonstrated an apparent disregard for the implications of its arms transfers to the Middle East. As you know, both Congress and the Administration were deeply disturbed by China's sale of Silkworm missiles to Iran, particularly because these missiles posed--and continue to pose--a grave threat to international shipping in the Persian Gulf as well as to U.S. ships and personnel.

On a wider scale, during the 1980's, China has been a significant source of weapons for both sides in the Iran-Iraq war and continues to be a major supplier to Iran. At a time when the U.S. has been attempting to enlist international support for an arms embargo against either combatant which does not support U.N. Security Council Resolution 598, such a policy cannot be viewed as constructive.

The sale of Chinese CSS-2 missiles to Saudi Arabia created an extremely troubling precedent, as the Administration itself noted. It introduced a new weapons system--an intermediate-range ballistic missile--into the volatile Mideast, one which can be equipped with either chemical or nuclear warheads. The consequences for all countries in the region could be devastating. Further, the sale of the CSS-2 will encourage procurement and proliferation by other Mideast countries of this destabilizing class of missiles.

Seen in this context, the sale of ballistic missiles to Syria would be a grave mistake, particularly given credible reports of Syria's indigenous chemical warfare capability. Such sophisticated weapons in the hands of Syria would certainly pose a significant danger to her neighbors, could not

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help but jeopardize both American interests and the quest for stability in the region, and would have a deleterious effect on U.S.-China relations.

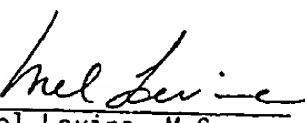
Given the history of China's willingness to sell dangerous weapons with apparent disregard to the nature of the purchaser--and the ineffectiveness of previous protests by the U.S. government--we believe stronger action is needed. We therefore believe it is necessary to inform China that future United States cooperation in technological and military matters will be jeopardized unless this indiscriminate arms sales policy comes to a halt.

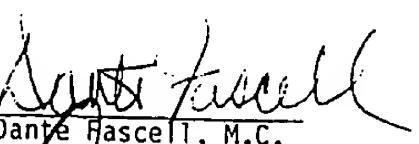
More specifically, China should stem the flow of weapons to the combatants in the Iran-Iraq war--especially Iran--and should desist from any plan to sell ballistic missiles to Syria or anyone else in the Middle East. In addition, China should join the Missile Technology Control Regime approved last year by the seven Western industrial nations, designed to restrict access to missile technology. China's willingness to take these steps would demonstrate an ability to act responsibly in this most volatile region.

China's sale of weapons--and especially ballistic missiles and associated technologies--to governments with no interest in peace in the Middle East and Persian Gulf upsets regional stability and severely complicates U.S. efforts to work for a resolution of conflicts in those regions. This message needs to be brought home to the Chinese government in the clearest possible fashion.

We urge you to raise this matter at the highest levels of the Chinese government during your meetings in Beijing today and tomorrow.

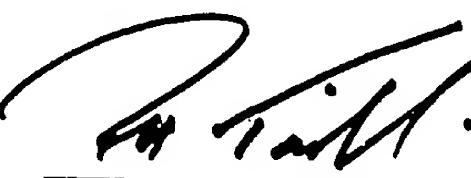
Sincerely,

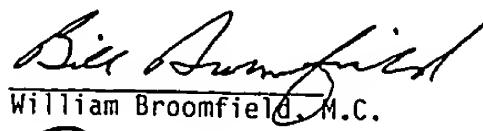
  
Mel Levine, M.C.

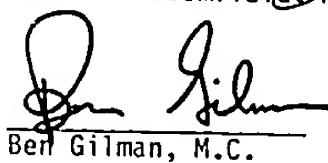
  
Dante Fascell, M.C.

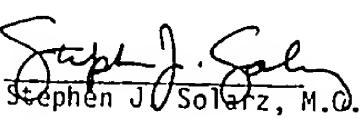
  
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Robert Dornan, M.C.

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Barbara Vucanovich, M.C.

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Patrick Swindall, M.C.

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Jim Leach, M.C.

Ronald V. Dellums

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Cass Ballenger, M.C.

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John Porter, M.C.

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Wayne Owens  
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Howard Wolpe  
Howard Wolpe, M.C.

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